

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative *in Bahrain*

MEPI supports the commitment of the United States to a strong partnership with the Kingdom of Bahrain. This partnership bolsters the goal of building a prosperous, secure, and peaceful future for all segments of Bahraini society.

Through its projects and initiatives, MEPI works in collaboration with a range of Bahraini civic, economic, and government institutions. MEPI helps develop the capacity of local civil society groups, especially those addressing the needs of underrepresented groups, such as women and youth. MEPI also supports projects that enhance job creation and foster widespread, private sector-led growth.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MEPI's economic programming in Bahrain supports projects that foster entrepreneurship, offer job skills and leadership training, and cultivate broad-based, private-sector led growth that provides opportunities for all Bahrainis.

Bahrain's first Business Angels firm – Tenmou – used MEPI assistance to establish a three-month business mentoring program for high-potential, innovative Bahraini entrepreneurs. Through mentoring, young entrepreneurs connect with start-up experts and develop business plans to bring their ideas into actionable pitches for investors. They also gain training in social media and digital marketing, accounting, and human resource management. The project culminates with the young entrepreneurs receiving opportunities to present their companies to investors, allowing them to potentially take their businesses to the next level.

Previously funded by MEPI, Junior Achievement USA implemented the Generation Entrepreneurs Project. Volunteers from various international corporations provided mentorship to an estimated 22,000 high school and university students from across the MENA region, culminating in a regional competition in which 13 of the top student-led businesses vied for "Best Company of the Year." Aramex, the largest private postal company in the region, also provided 100 of the most promising companies with \$1,000 each to scale-up and continue their entrepreneurial ventures. MEPI supports the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program, which provides legal and technical expertise to enhance Bahrain's

commercial legal framework. This technical assistance bolsters trade liberalization and economic diversity, fostering Bahrain's business-enabling environment. In addition, the program helped the Bahrain Chamber of Dispute Resolution develop arbitration practices that now serve as a model for the region.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

MEPI continues to expand its engagement with local CSOs through its unique Local Grant Program, which directly supports civic actors throughout the country.

One of MEPI's local grants supports the Future Partners Foundation for Development (FPFD) to build the capacity of student unions at 14 Yemeni universities. These students are being trained in advocacy and campaign lobbying, new social media tools, and political development.

MEPI is also supporting Partners for Democratic Change (PDC) and its affiliate, Partners Yemen, to enhance the organizational development of newly-established or less-experienced CSOs in Yemen. The Support for Training, Advocacy, and Networking in Developing Democracies (STAND) project provides training, resources, curricula, and mentoring support to CSOs in the areas of leadership and governance, administration, and project development, as well as funding for small grants. The CSOs receiving training will also be encouraged to develop cross-country coalitions to work collaboratively to amplify their efforts.



STRENGTHENING THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

In addition, MEPI supports the development of the legal and judicial system in Bahrain through a partnership with the American Bar Association (ABA). ABA-led trainings focus on building the capacity of Bahrain's Judicial Legal Studies Institute, enabling staff to develop and conduct continuing legal education trainings for local lawyers, prosecutors, and judges. The ABA also partners with the University of Bahrain to develop and implement a legal clinic curriculum focused on human rights law, where students work on human rights issues in their communities under the supervision of a clinic supervisor.